Knot In My Chest

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Knot In My Chest

by WordsAblaze

Summary

> “You don’t inspire obedience, Mason, and nor do you deserve it.”
>
> Mason laughs. “You’ll change your mind soon enough.”
>
> Will moves to lunge for him, but the leather band digs into his throat and he finds himself pulled backwards, gasping and coughing. Too late, he notices that the collar has been attached to a short length of chain bolted to the floor.
>
> “Brilliant!” Mason exclaims in delight. “Do it again!”
>
> Unable to do much else, Will spits at him.

Notes

> back at it with muskrat farm because it's so nice and angsty here ^-^
>
> day 17 prompts used: collar

See the end of the work for more notes

The first thing Will registers is Hannibal's gaze, soft but fierce and trained solely on him.

The second thing he registers—alongside wondering how on earth it wasn't the first—is that the world is upside down. Or rather, *he* is upside down.

"Welcome to Muskrat Farm!" Mason declares gleefully, but neither Hannibal nor Will spare him a glance.

Will isn't entirely sure what happens next because, between one blink and the next, he goes from hanging in a van to sitting at a lavish dining table. And again, the first thing he registers about his new surroundings is the weight of Hannibal's gaze.

Turning his head, Will finds himself inexplicably comforted by the concern in Hannibal's eyes, and the way his frown softens into a smile once Will manages to focus on him. He forgets, momentarily, that they'd been kidnapped, and is halfway back to his quiet little stream before Mason makes himself and his intentions known.

There is far too much pain bouncing through his bones for him to know exactly what is being discussed over his head, but he gathers enough to know there's no reason to entertain the planning of their own death. Which is why he clamps his teeth down on Cordell's cheek, refusing to let go until his bite goes clean through, at which point he pointedly spits the gore out and turns his gaze back to Hannibal, who, strangely comfortingly, *beams* at him.

Of course, his action does not remain without consequence, and Will groans as he's roughly untied and pulled upright, then dragged along sharply enough to make him stumble, narrowly missing hitting his head on various decorations several times before they reach their destination.

"If you insist on acting like a rabid dog, we have no choice but to treat you as one," Cordell growls as he forces Will to his knees, fiddling with this and that as Will struggles to keep his eyes open. "And, finally…"

Will flinches as Cordell flicks his forehead, forcing himself back into the present. He gasps in surprise immediately, his left hand reaching up to his neck, where he finds a thick strip of leather. He swallows, and glares up at Cordell with as much hatred as he can muster. "Did you… did you really just *collar* me?"

Mason wheels himself into view beside Cordell, who nods at his employer and leaves the room. "I haven't decided on whether you should be muzzled too. Depends how disobedient you turn out to be."

Despite the fog creeping over most of his mind, Will scowls. "You don't inspire obedience, Mason, and nor do you deserve it."

He probably shouldn't have said anything, he realises as Mason laughs, the sound jagged and unsettling as it echoes in the air around them. "You'll change your mind soon enough."

Will moves to lunge for him, but the leather band digs into his throat and he finds himself pulled backwards, gasping and coughing. Too late, he notices that the collar has been attached to a short length of chain bolted to the floor. Mason continues laughing above him, and he squeezes his eyes shut, his fists clenching in anger as he recovers.

“Brilliant!” Mason exclaims in delight. “Do it again!”

Unable to do much else, Will spits at him.

The furious expression on the functioning half of Mason’s face is *almost* worth the certainty that, as soon as he can find another lackey, a muzzle will definitely be introduced. Before that happens, though, Will can’t resist asking: “Where’s Hannibal?”

“The man who tried to kill you?” Mason asks, raising an eyebrow.

“Where is he?” Will repeats, because Hannibal had tried to *consume* him, not simply *kill* him as if he were nothing but a nuisance. But of course the unsophisticated likes of Mason Verger wouldn’t be able to tell the difference, so he doesn’t bother trying to explain.

Mason, childishly having switched from anger to amusement, laughs. “People don’t tend to collar pigs the same way they do dogs, do they?”

Will frowns, his head not yet clear enough to pick up exactly what is being implied. Thankfully, Mason, eager to show off, continues: “This *is* a farm, after all. Any good farmer marks their stock as his own. And nothing sticks quite like a brand, my father used to say.”

Eyes wide, Will strains against the collar again, leering as far forward as he can without choking himself. “He is *not* yours to claim.”

“Aww, and you think he’s *yours* to defend?” Mason retorts mockingly, but his eyes then flicker between Will’s eyes and his bloodstained lips. It gives his uncertainty away, and Will abruptly remembers the way he’d so easily been convinced to eat his own nose; he almost feels *silly* for having forgotten that Vergers have never maintained their advantage for long, and there’s no reason to think that Hannibal would let their current predicament be any more than a temporary—eventually well-avenged—one.

Deciding that he’s long overdue a fishing trip, Will leans back, crossing his legs and closing his eyes, ignoring whatever Mason says to try and re-engage him. Besides, his head is aching something fierce, and it’s been getting increasingly more difficult to tune out the burning pain of his most recent wound.

He catches more than his fair share—Abigail smiles at him from shore the whole time, her legs swinging from where they dangle over a boulder—before hands reach up from the water around his knees and *yank* . He cries out, fishing rod slipping from his fingers as his feet slip over the rocks beneath him, and his head tips under the surface of the stream, his lungs immediately protesting as the air is knocked out of his lungs and given no chance to get back in.

Will’s eyes fly open.

There's something clamped over his mouth but it isn't one of the hands that had yanked him from his moment of solace. It's something cold and sharp and unforgiving and, when Will lifts his hands to try and remove it, thrown into memories of accusations he's never quite left behind, he finds only smooth metal.

Smooth metal, wrapped firmly around the lower half of his face, curving down below his chin and up across his nose, tightly fastened at the back of his head. His cry of frustration is muffled by the way his lips have no room to move, and he forces himself to breathe slowly, knowing that the amount of air seeping in through the small holes at the front of the muzzle is nowhere near enough to afford him panicking.

"I hope that's not too comfortable for you," Cordell says from above him, and it takes Will a moment to realise what's wrong with the statement. He can't protest, though, so he settles on glaring, and Cordell laughs smugly. "You'll be an interesting one to tame, I can tell."

Will wants to argue that he has no intention of being tamed, that better men than him have tried and failed, but he's not stupid enough to goad the man when he can barely breathe, never mind fight.

Cordell leans forward with a smirk. "Don't you worry, you'll be given plenty of opportunity to scream once your… friend has been slaughtered."

A growl rises in Will's throat before he can stop it and he surges forwards, wrapping his hands around Cordell's neck and digging his fingers in as hard as he can. Unfortunately, all Cordell has to do is pull himself backwards for Will to be forced into retreating; the chain goes taut and the collar bites harshly into his jugular, his chest desperately rising and falling as he struggles to catch his breath through the muzzle.

"Bad dog," Cordell scowls.

Will closes his eyes, tilts his head back, and hopes Hannibal has a plan.

poor Will is trying SO hard to dissociate—

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